



PARO

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love of medicine

April 29th, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Via Email: premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier:

Re: Ontario Pandemic Pay for Frontline Workers

We were very pleased on Saturday to hear you announce the Government's plan to provide pandemic pay for Ontario's frontline workers fighting COVID-19. While we were disheartened when we saw the list of health care workers and realized that resident doctors were not included, we were encouraged when we learned Monday that the list would be expanded. This morning we were shocked when we read news reports indicating that, while other frontline workers have been added, our members have not been included.

We represent the 5500 doctors who providing front line care in Ontario's teaching hospitals, primarily in the hospitals where COVID is hitting hardest. Our members are fully qualified doctors who are engaged in 2 – 7 year post-MD training programs to be specialists. Residents are hospital employees and are often the only doctors in the hospital overnight and on weekends.

Many of our members have had their training disrupted in order to be redeployed to provide frontline COVID care and many are providing the highest risk care. Many have needed to live apart from their partners and families out of concern of inadvertently bringing the virus home.

The average resident doctor works in excess of 80 hours per week. Although they receive an annual salary, the actual hourly amount they are paid is often below minimal wage. Most residents have over \$110,000 in accumulated educational debt acquired during their medical training.

As you may know, Quebec has implemented a pandemic pay program. They have included resident doctors as part of their program.

Mr. Premier, our members are amongst the only frontline health care providers who work in excess of 24 hours when they are providing in-hospital overnight coverage. In many instances, they are working with limited access to PPE.

We implore you to include our members in the Government's Pandemic Pay Plan and treat them like all other frontline hospital employees. If they are ignored, while other health care employees that they work alongside are recognized, the demoralizing effect will be profound.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this request.

Respectfully yours,

Anthea Lafreniere, MD
PARO President

cc. The Honourable Christine Elliot, Minister of Health
Ms. Helen Angus, Deputy Minister of Health